

PRESS RELEASE

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Coalition of Universities Selected to Gather Data about PhD Career Pathways Project will Help PhD Programs Strengthen their Professional Development and Mentoring Efforts

Washington, DC – Twenty-nine universities have been selected to participate in a collective effort to gather and use data about the careers of PhD students and alumni, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) announced today. Grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF grant #1661272) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will support data collection about PhD careers in STEM and humanities fields.

The universities and consortia that have been selected to receive awards to participate as funded project partners are:

- **Arizona State University**
- **Brown University**
- **Emory University**
- **Morgan State University & University of Maryland, Baltimore County**
- **New York University**
- **The State University of New York (SUNY) Consortium**
 - SUNY Albany
 - SUNY Binghamton
 - SUNY Buffalo
 - SUNY Stony Brook
- **Texas A&M University & The University of Texas at Austin**
- **University of Arkansas**
- **The University of California System Consortium**
 - University of California, Berkeley
 - University of California, Davis
 - University of California, Irvine
 - University of California, Los Angeles
 - University of California, Merced
 - University of California, Riverside
 - University of California, San Diego
 - University of California, San Francisco
 - University of California, Santa Barbara
 - University of California, Santa Cruz
- **University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**
- **University of Notre Dame**
- **University of Virginia**
- **University of Washington**
- **University of Wisconsin, Madison**
- **Wayne State University**

These universities collectively awarded over 8,000 PhD degrees in 2013-14 alone. CGS is expanding the scope of data collection by inviting other CGS doctoral institutions to participate as [affiliate partners](#).

Over the course of the multi-year project, universities will collect data from current PhD students and alumni with surveys that were developed by CGS in consultation with senior university leaders, funding agencies, disciplinary societies, researchers, and PhD students and alumni. The resulting data will allow universities to analyze PhD career preferences and outcomes at the program level and help faculty and university leaders strengthen career services, professional development opportunities, and mentoring in doctoral programs.

Universities will also be able to use the data to communicate the career trajectories of PhD alumni to current and prospective students, helping them to make more informed selections of PhD programs.

(more)

“Today, universities recognize that PhD students aspire to a wide variety of careers, including academic research and teaching,” said CGS President Suzanne Ortega. “Knowing what your alumni do— and how well they are prepared—is becoming the new paradigm, and our university partners are leading the way for the entire community of doctoral institutions.”

CGS will study the processes of survey administration and identify promising practices for implementation that will be shared with graduate schools nationally. Universities from across the country will be able to compare their data on PhD career preferences and outcomes with the national dataset analyzed by CGS.

Rush Holt, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), noted that the project will expand the country’s understanding of the U.S. STEM workforce. “We already know that PhD-trained scientists contribute to the STEM workforce in every sector. One of the important things this project promises to give us is a better picture of the skills needed to be successful in the wide variety of careers available to today’s and tomorrow’s graduate students.”

The initiative will also provide a deeper understanding of PhD careers in the humanities. “The initiative meshes well with comparable work on expanding career horizons and opportunities for humanities PhDs,” noted Jim Grossman, executive director of the American Historical Association and a member of the committee that advised CGS on survey development. “This work will give us critically-needed information about diverse career pathways among humanists, many of whom pursue careers beyond the professoriate. Its results will empower doctoral students and alumni working to understand and expand the career options available to them.”

The first wave of the survey will be sent to PhD alumni in Fall of 2017, and CGS will begin publishing the first wave of survey findings the following Fall.

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The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization’s mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

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